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ABSTRACT

It has been argued that qualitative research demands a special ethics code because of the special relationship between researcher and subject. Ethical aspects of teacher-thinking research were examined by asking 12 teacher-thinking researchers in Israel to participate in an interview on ethical issues of teacher thinking. Interview transcripts were analyzed and analyses were validated by two expert judges. With this information, a semistructured questionnaire was developed to explore ethics in teacher-thinking research and the relationship between researcher and teacher-subject. The questionnaire was completed by 25 participants at the 1993 International Study Association on Teacher Thinking. A wide range of opinions was apparent, so it was difficult to draw conclusions. In the Israeli community females and younger researchers appear to be more sensitive to ethical issues, but this is not the case in the international community. It is suggested that the code of professional ethics regarding the relationship between professionals and clients in general is not applicable to teacher thinking research, in which the teacher is more like the researcher's partner than like a client or a patient. Two tables present study findings. (Contains 34 references.) (SLD)

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Teacher and Researcher: What Kind of Partnership is it? Ethical Implications

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Paper presented at the
American Educational Research Association Conference Symposium on
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Teacher and Researcher: What Kind of Partnership is it?
Ethical Implications

There is a school of thought which claims that a qualitative research paradigm demands a special ethics code because of the special relationship between researcher and subject (e.g., Cassell & Wax, 1980; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Soltis, 1990; Marshall, 1992). Actually, increasing agreement with this view in recent years led to the special session at the 1993 meeting of the American Educational Research Association devoted to ethical issues in qualitative research culminating in a special publication (Mathison, Ross & Cornett, 1993).

The purpose of this paper is to identify and study ethical aspects of teacher thinking research in an attempt to enhance the research community's awareness of this issue. It pertains both to the design and implementation stages of studies and relates to anticipated as well as unexpected events in the course of research. In order to focus our thinking and to identify distinct problems, we set out to create an inventory of issues related to the teacher-researcher partnership.

Prologue

A few years ago my then doctoral student, Nitza Shafriri, told me about a problem that arose during her dissertation study on a teacher's pedagogical knowledge of the didactical computer language, Logo. The teacher in question accidentally saw some of the researcher's observation notes which included critical reflection as well as factual data. This upset the teacher and jeopardized the study. Nitza managed to smooth this over; not, however, without much unpleasantness. This

experience raised some questions in our minds. We first considered how to present the final report, including the judgmental aspects which are part of any research, with minimal offense to the teacher (who would probably expect to see the report), yet without affecting the credibility of the research and the clarity of its conclusions. We later decided to look further into some of the ethical aspects of similar studies.

While in other fields such as law, medicine and psychology, ethics codes have long existed, education, except for the areas of testing and measurement (Joint Committee, 1981), did not until recently have such a code (Ethical Standards, 1992). Teacher thinking research in particular, because of the central role of the teacher informant as the direct subject of the research and the source of reflections yielding personal narratives (Elbaz, 1993), and where the researcher "penetrates" the teacher's mind in a way that may have ethical consequences, deserves, as will be discussed in this paper, special attention.

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to advocate special attention to ethics through specification and modification and greater attention to codes of ethics relating to teacher thinking. By creating an inventory of the variety of issues and concerns as seen by teacher researchers, we hope to enhance the research community's awareness of ethics in teacher thinking research and contribute to its professionalism.

Literature Background

The few explicit examples of scholarship on these topics deal with questions of integrity as well as questions of ethics in general in teacher thinking.

The domain of true partnership between the teacher and the researcher encompasses questions which can be divided into two groups:

1) The relationship between the researcher and the teacher informant

Commitment to research authenticity - How can the desire of the teacher to receive feedback after any observation or interview be reconciled with the need to avoid influencing the informant's behavior? Are the teacher's solitude in the classroom and his/her need for feedback from an adult exploited by the researcher? Is it the researcher's role to be helpful, or merely to describe observed behavior?

Researchers who have dealt with these questions include Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1990) who, in their paper advocating cooperative research, make the following statement: "Cooperative research provides valuable insights into the interrelationships of theory and practice, but like more traditional interpretive research, often constructs and predetermines teachers' roles in the research process, thereby framing and mediating teachers' perspectives through researchers' perspectives" (p. 3).

Gudmundsdottir (1992), with reference to issues of integrity, points out that "informants are often keen to please their researchers... The scene is set for compelling [teachers'] stories that sparkle in their narrative truth" (p. 6). A similar caution regarding the meaning we give to stories while ignoring the forces that play on

their construction, is raised by Carter (1993). Clark (1991) points out that the stories tell more about the researchers and their narrative competence than they do about the research site or the informants.

2) Cooperation between researcher and informant

Another aspect of the domain of partnership is the commitment to cooperation between researcher and informant - What is a truly informed partnership? How is this partnership defined? What level of mutual agreement between teacher-informant and researcher is needed? Can the interdependence between the teacher and the research be controlled? Should it? Whose is the definitive interpretation of the data? Should there be partnership in interpretation of the findings? In reporting the research?

Studies dealing with some of these questions include that of Cornett and Chase (1989) who identify several primary ethical concerns, among them the nature of free informed consent and Scheurich (1992) who notes that "interviewees are not passive subjects, they are active participants, active controllers of the interaction. They...often use the interviewer as much as the interviewer is using them" (p. 11). He also points out that "the interviewee is under the spotlight, while the researcher's life remains hidden" (p. 10).

McCutcheon (1990) defends the teachers' right to veto elements of the data collection as well as the form of the final report, and specifically the conclusions. On the other extreme, we find Eisner's view that "in the final analysis, the decision to disseminate or publicize should rest with the researcher.... Giving someone else the right of approval or disapproval ...is to undermine the competence of the writer whose name is on the work" (Eisner, 1991, p. 115).

Risks to the informant

Regarding the risks to the informant and to the credibility of the research, e.g., biases and problems of truthfulness, the following questions arise: Can the researcher explain to the teacher/informant the extent of his/her vulnerability as a result of this kind of research? To what extent is the researcher responsible for or capable of mending damage caused to the teacher's self-image, or, alternately, for bringing about a positive self-image, resulting from exposure? What should be done if significantly negative aspects arise in the study? Can abuse of thick data by teachers' superiors be avoided? What are the implications of the fact that the researcher always views the particular teaching practice through his/her own pedagogical knowledge? How does the researcher's personal experience and knowledge of teaching interact with the informant, e.g., Reinharz's (1984) "experiential" view? By whose benefit is the research motivated?

Few studies relate to questions of risk; among these are the following: Ayers and Schubert (1990), for instance, discuss the researcher's dilemma when s/he sees something harmful happening in the classroom and they question what should be done in such situations. Burgess (1989) and Shulman (1990) discuss ethical consequences which hinge upon the question of anonymity versus visibility. Cornett and Chase (1989) also identify as primary ethical issues the protection of confidentiality when thick description is reported, and the potential negative effects of intensive and extended scrutiny as weighed against potential positive effects.

Against the background of this literature review, a mini-study was carried out to explore the attitudes of teacher thinking researchers toward some of the questions raised above.

The Study

A dozen teacher thinking researchers (who comprise almost the entire Israeli research community in this area) were asked to participate in a short interview on "Ethical issues of teacher thinking". All agreed without hesitation. Seven of the twelve researchers were female and five were male, four were in their late thirties or early forties and the rest were fifty and above.

The interviews, consisting of four probing questions, were semi-open and lasted about 60 minutes; they were recorded with the researchers' consent. The interviewees were encouraged to reflect on their own ideas, give vignettes or examples of their own encounters with ethical issues and raise new questions regarding ethical concerns and their awareness of these in research. The transcripts were analysed qualitatively, using emic and etic categories (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). Analyses were validated by two expert judges. The findings are organized and presented according to the major categories that emerged from the responses rather than by frequency, since even a single response is viewed as representative of the researchers' thinking. Frequency is noted only in those cases where it was felt to be significant.

Based on this data collection, a semi-structured questionnaire with space for free expression was designed. It included four questions eliciting teacher thinking researchers' views of what constitute important ethical concerns; to what extent they view teacher/informants as research partners; the extent to which they share research objectives with teacher/informants; and the affect of research on teacher cognition. The questionnaire was administered anonymously at the 1993 International Study Association on Teacher Thinking (ISATT) Conference

in Goteborg, Sweden and was returned by twenty-five of some 70 participants. Of the respondents, more than half were female, the majority were between ages 40 and 50, eight were from North America, eight from Scandinavia, five from other parts of Europe and four from Asia and the Pacific area.

Findings and Discussion

Most of the researchers' responses in the interviews could be grouped into three areas: 1) Awareness of ethical issues; 2) The nature of the partnership between researcher and informant teacher and 3) The meaning of the researcher's cognitive intervention. The majority of the interviewees responses dealt with the two latter areas of concern. This paper will present only the data from the second area, the nature of partnership, based on interviews (Israeli researchers) and questionnaires (the international community), although we are aware of the difficulty involved in comparing responses collected through two different instruments.

Table 1 sums up both the International and the Israeli researchers' views regarding the nature of partnership as reflected in the interviews and on the questionnaire in response to the question, "Do you view the teacher/informant as a research partner?"

insert Table 1 about here

From Table 1 we can see that eleven respondents answered in the negative, or stated that the teacher's function is that of information provider. Twelve respondents stated that the extent of the partnership depended on the type of research and on the researcher's needs, while fourteen gave a positive, reasoned response. More females gave a

positive response than did males, and older researchers tended to respond in the negative more than younger researchers. Whereas a majority of the Israeli and the Scandinavian researchers responded that they did not view the teacher/informant as a research partner, none of the North American researchers answered this question in the negative. Three of the four Asian/Pacific researchers and all of the Europeans gave a positive response.

The Israeli Community

Great variability appears regarding the issue of teacher informants as research partners, in the sense often used in the literature (i.e., Connelly and Clandinin, 1986; Lather, 1986). However, most remarked immediately that in their experience this partnership was limited and commented on its restrictions. Of those who disagreed with this notion of partnership, one even called it a "hypocritical way of looking at this relationship". Interviewees' interpretations of the partnership varied from the most basic perception of teacher informants as "contributors to the body of knowledge" (the majority of the responses), through the view of teacher informants as "partners in interpretation" which emphasizes the mutuality and the collaborative nature, to the ultimate view, in which teachers are "partners in constructing a case study" (only one).

The International Community

The questionnaire given to members of the international community did not refer to the nature of the partnership per se since the question was worded, "Do you view your teacher/informant as a research partner?" Yet all except one respondent explained their answers, and a wide range

of views emerged. These varied from the minimalistic view which didn't perceive the teacher/informant as a partner, but rather as a vehicle for obtaining information, to the view that the teacher/informant is an active partner throughout the research including accreditation and publicity. One Scandinavian researcher explained his negative response with the simple statement, "They [teachers] have another profession" while another explained that teachers "are not usually familiar with research work" and admitted that she uses them "more as a tool". On the other end of the scale, one researcher emphasized the ethical aspect: "They [the teachers] own the observations and are my colleagues and should have some control". Another stated: "Educational research is collaborative and should not be parasitic."

We can see that in both the Israeli and the International communities, the responses vary greatly. While the Israeli researchers did not reject the term "the teacher/informant as partner", fewer agreed fully with this view than among the International community. In addition, researchers in both groups state that teachers are not trained for the other tasks in the research process.

Two aspects of the Israeli informants' view of the partnership arose from an analysis of the interviews: that of differing status between researcher and teacher, and the various views found regarding the mutuality of the partnership.

A. Differing status

In the interviews, several researchers commented on the different positions of the researcher and the teacher. Among these were the following remarks: "Each one comes to the interaction with a different status; the teacher contributes his/her story and the researcher classifies and defines the new knowledge"; or: "It is important to avoid the feeling of superiority that the researcher may give.... This leads to alienation.... You can't pretend that you are interested in the teacher's opinion if you are not, teachers sense it immediately...." This difference stands out especially in those cases where researchers use student teachers as informants. Four of the interviewees mentioned this difference in status, but only one raised the problem of the researcher's position of power vis a vis student teachers.

A few researchers commented on the fact that it is almost always one side who does the questioning, for example: "This one-sidedness creates a feeling that the teacher is being tested, that we are on opposite sides of the fence, especially since we question them on subject matter knowledge not always during the period when they are teaching the specific topic in class.... It is not necessarily at their fingertips at the time of our study and thus they may feel uneasy."

While at the beginning of the interaction between the researcher and the teacher, the latter is at an advantage since the study depends entirely on his/her willingness to share his/her story, after extracting the information from the teacher there is a definite shift of power to the researcher. A few of the interviewees noted that "the researcher has an advantage in every respect, he gets the publicity while the teacher remains anonymous", or as one younger Israeli researcher said: "I'm not afraid to remove the wall between the researcher and the

teacher. I see turning our teachers into teacher/researchers as an ideal.... This will improve their teaching...but this is not what happens in teacher thinking research.... What exists today is more a philanthropic attitude: 'We have come from the university to help you'." It seems that what bothers this researcher is not the inequality of roles which is legitimate and should not be problematic, but rather the patronizing attitude of the researchers toward the teachers.

The different status of the researcher and the teacher seems not to be a problem as long as each respects the other and keeps his/her promises. Since keeping promises is most important, each side needs to know exactly what the contract entails. According to contract theory, a good contract will describe the relationship between the parties and state clearly under what conditions it is entered into and how and to what extent it can be changed. The contractual aspect of the problem of ethical standards in research derives its philosophical and moral base from liberal philosophy which believed firmly in the "sanctity of contract" (Salmond, 1947). This is the ultimate expression of one's right to freely relinquish freedom by binding oneself to a mandatory contract. In our case, the teacher, and certainly the student-teacher, is clearly in a weaker position vis a vis the researcher.

An additional concern linked to the issue of differing status was the extent to which researchers felt ready to reveal the true purpose of the study to the teacher in order to obtain informed consent. When you are supposed to share the research objectives with the informant before receiving his/her consent to carrying out the study, you face the problem of research truth. Table 2 sums up the views of all the researchers in both the International and the Israeli groups, with the exception of four Israelis with whom the issue did not arise in the

interviews since they were not asked about it directly. The responses are presented on a scale of 1 to 5 (from "not at all" willing to share their objectives, to "fully" willing to do so) and respondents are divided according to the researchers' responses to the question "Do you view the teacher/ informant as a research partner?" (see Table 1).

insert Table 2 about here

Not surprisingly, all the researchers who viewed teacher/informants as partners expressed willingness to share the research objectives with the teachers, while researchers who held the opposite view, tended not to share their objectives fully. Most of the Israelis were ready to reveal only part of the truth, justifying this as a way of minimizing the effect of bias on the teachers. Only those who studied pedagogical subject matter knowledge had no problem sharing the research objectives with their teachers. One researcher referred to the partnership by saying: "Anyone who does not know the true research objectives can't be called a real partner". Such a comment leads us to reflect on an additional question: Is it legitimate to lie for the good of the research? Our immediate reaction is an unconditional no, in line with Erickson (1982) who states that one is never justified in using deception for research purposes; however, there are instances when it may be preferable not to expose the whole truth.[1] This sometimes justified hesitancy in disclosing research objectives may act as a limiting factor in the definition of the partnership itself.

Among the International community, responses to this question show that seven fully agreed to share their objectives with the teacher/ informants for various reasons. Some mentioned the quality of the research: "It facilitates data collection", or: "In order to motivate teachers to participate" or: "so that they do not feel threatened by

process or product". Others raised ethical concerns that demand sharing objectives with the teachers: "They own the observations and are my colleagues and should have some control" or: "The opposite attitude would be immoral" or: "Everything is open at the beginning to give them the opportunity to withdraw". The right of withdrawal was mentioned by two researchers. Five of the respondents tended not to share their objectives. They justified this stance with methodological considerations such as "It depends on the kind of research" or: "after data collection" or: "up to a certain limit, so as not to receive what the informant thinks I would like to receive". One respondent noted that she didn't share her objectives at all if she was "trying to trace information, corroborate or disconfirm another account". However, one of the Australian researchers noted that she doesn't "want to do research <u>on</u> teachers but <u>with</u> teachers, so I explain all about the research and ask them what they want to know".

B. Mutual construction of new knowledge

Since the question of partnership in knowledge construction arose in the oral interviews but was not directly referred to on the questionnaire, most responses in this category stem from the interviews. A most surprising picture emerged of the Israeli researchers' view of informants operating as partners in the research, of their interpretation, and of the possibility of shared reporting. It would be natural to expect researchers who use open observations followed by interviews as part of a qualitative paradigm, to view the informants' interpretations as an integral part of the interpretive research approach. However, mutual construction of new knowledge (by researcher and teacher) was mentioned by only two researchers and even they did not

perceive of it in terms of Connelly and Clandinin's (1986) narrative approach, where new knowledge construction is a joint venture.

Lincoln and Guba (1989) firmly advocated the right of the respondant/participant to "shape that information's use and to assist in formulating the purposes to which they will lend their names and information. To do less is to violate, to intrude and to condemn to indignity" (p.236). On the other hand, McCutcheon's (1990) view that the teacher/ informant has the right to veto the final form of the report seems to us and to some of the researchers who referred to this issue as being a bit extreme. In general, there is little commitment to accepting the teacher's interpretations or endorsement of his/her statements and insights prior to publication. This seems to reflect a double standard considering that such low commitment is not in keeping with researchers' current caution regarding their own conference papers on which they so often stipulate "Do not quote without permission".

Among the Israelis, even those who accepted the idea that informants construct new knowledge together with the researcher, most did not consider asking for the informant's interpretation of the findings before publication, not to mention the idea of publicly acknowledging the teacher's contribution. Only two, after being asked, considered the possibility of doing so in the future. All justified their stand by pointing to the advantage of anonymity to the teacher. Most of the Israelis said they had no objections to showing teachers both the interpretation and results before publishing the report. However, few actually took this initiative, and those who worked with student teachers added that by the time the report was ready, the informants would often be unreachable. Others noted that this was sometimes the case with practicing teachers as well, considering the

lengthy interval between data collection and publication.

One of the few members of the International community who referred to this issue was an Australian researcher who expressed a diametrically different view. She described the contribution of the teacher/informant in terms of what the researcher can learn from the teacher's interpretation: "They have alternative perspectives to mine.... Behavior is often complex and there are several layers of interpretation that are valid and provide insight into complexity." Not surprisingly, this is the researcher who described her work as "not on, but with, teachers".

One Israeli researcher made a distinction between the teacher as a research object and as a partner in constructing new knowledge, when she said, "If you approach research in the sense of 'I have come to study you', this is not a partnership, but if you mean it in the sense of 'Let's build the story together', as in the narrative method, that is a partnership." Another researcher went to an extreme when she viewed the whole research encounter as a "mutual collaboration". In her view, the interdependence was such that the theory of action (the new knowledge) constructed in this research should be viewed as a joint endeavor.

It seems that the willingness of researchers to accept the teacher's comments on the researcher's interpretations may in part depend on the stage of the study; the farther it progresses, the less the researchers ask the informant to comment on the interpretations. Another factor is the feeling of some researchers that teachers tend to express opinions, attitudes, ect. which they believe the researchers expect to hear, an aspect which complicates the issue of teachers' shared interpretations. One Israeli interviewee recently performed a study in which she asked her student-teacher informants to endorse each step of the interpretation as the study progressed, a procedure she took

from MacDonald (1976), however, even she did not ask the latters' consent to the final report, "because it doesn't work that way". On the other hand, one member of the International research community noted pragmatically that teachers "don't have to give me answers if I'm not ready to feed them back the results. I have no problem in accrediting teachers. I have done so in the past." Regardless of the researcher's position vis a vis the teacher's interpretations, clearly the researcher must indicate the teacher's statements as primary sources, while the researcher's interpretations are secondary. Based on a comment made by one European researcher that mutuality is essential when carrying out action research, we assume that greater symmetry exists in action research, but this assumption should be further studied.

It is important to emphasize that most of our researchers expressed reservations regarding the teachers' rights at the reporting stage. One might ask if the fact that the Israeli and Scandinavian research communities lagged behind leading North American researchers in adopting the qualitative paradigm may have effected their attitude in this matter, regardless of the fact that the younger researchers were exposed to interpretive approaches during their formal training. (One wonders if this fact may contribute to the more open, equal, democratic stance taken by younger researchers.) Clearly, there is room for both the conservative, researcher-dominated kind of research and the researcher-teacher partnership kind. The former, which we found to be more prevalent, unknowingly embraces Eisner's (1991) stand denying the teachers' right of approval, as quoted above. Our findings indicate that there is a need to refine and crystallize the definition of the expression "the teacher as research partner". It is time to come out of the slogan stage to the point where the researcher and the teacher

define together for each case what kind of partnership is intended and where and what kind of responsibility this entails (Mackwood, 1993). Based on our findings, such a definition would include the following components which may be relevant to any subject of study, but have emerged very distinctly in our particular field:

* Readiness to share the research objectives with the teacher/informant
* The level of independence and responsibility given to teacher/informants concerning the research design, its implementation and eventual feedback
* The weight and place given to the teacher/informant's interpretation

Above all, there must be honest acceptance of the fact that without either of the two partners, there could be no research and no new knowledge in this area could be constructed. This is the true meaning of a mutual process, and clarifying the parties' responsibilities in advance, tedious and time consuming as this may be, is essential.

The general question which emerges from these findings on both aspects of partnership - that of differing status, and that of mutual construction of knowledge - is "When and under what conditions do researchers accept teachers as partners?". Researchers' attitudes on this question vary. This variability doesn't indicate that there are preferred ethical relationships. What is most important is the mutual respect between researcher and teacher, and not their different status. As this mini-study shows, "mutual construction of knowledge" in Connelly and Clandinin's (1986) sense seems to be the highest level of partnership in research. However, most of our researcher-informants do

not reach this level: The teachers' share in this partnership is the contribution of their story and only to a small degree their interpretation. Beyond this, controlling the interviews, organizing and classifying the data, generating the knowledge generalizations, writing up the report and taking responsibility for its content - all these are performed by the researcher and it is s/he who gets the credit, the praise and the criticism.

The question of reciprocity is dealt with in different ways in various fields: the researcher takes knowledge from the informant; reciprocity may be through acknowledgement, remuneration or therapeutic value. Even "having another pair of adult eyes in the lonely classroom", as teachers often say, may be beneficial. In participatory research, researchers reciprocate through advocacy, shared power and emancipatory action. As Mathison et al. (1993) point out, "Seldom does the exchange of commodities create an equally beneficial situation for all involved" (p. 4).

Intimate questioning of the teacher on the one hand, and no accreditation on the other, is often justified by referring to the protection of teachers' anonymity. Researchers offer teachers anonymity as protection from potential negative consequences, such as the effect on their status, their self-confidence, etc. But in fact the thick description which characterizes this kind of research may lead to identification, e.g., of the school (especially in relatively small educational systems), without prior consent having been either requested or given, a fact which adds to the complexity of the problem (Shulman 1990). In addition, when the teacher remains anonymous, the story is "given" to the researcher who adds her/his interpretation, and often the fact that the story basically "belongs" to the teacher is obscured. One

alternative is to accept the teacher as a recognized partner who is expected to give up anonymity while the researcher, on her/his part, relinquishes exclusiveness of credit[2].

In conclusion, in the Israeli and the International research communities, we can see a wide range of opinions regarding ethical issues related to research partnership in teacher thinking research. Because of the small size of the groups, it is difficult to draw conclusions. While in the Israeli community we were able to identify females and younger researchers as being more sensitive to ethical issues, this was not entirely the case in the international community, where gender was not significant, and the differences seem to be related to geography and age.

The reasoning of members of the international community who did exhibit high ethical awareness and sensitivity, seems to reflect a more comprehensive set of rules for human relationships in general. The very high level of partnership expressed in the option to withdraw from the research, which two of these researchers gave their teacher/informants, indicates their respect for the rights of the informants in the ethical spirit of other, more veteran fields, such as clinical psychology, even if this may mean ending the research before it actually begins. This may be related to the American and Australian tradition of defending human rights.

In respect to viewing the teacher/informant as research partner, among the ten in the international community who viewed this partnership positively and unconditionally as equal, their reasoning emphasizes the teachers' contribution and knowledge as belonging to the informant.

Conclusions

An attempt has been made here to engage in an exploratory study intended to describe some ethical aspects of teacher thinking research. Though some difficulties which arise in the research, i.e., bias and truthfullness, are strongly related to methodology, this does not lessen their ethical implications. Justification for examining these issues is derived among others from studies (i.e., Rudduck & Hopkins, 1985; Cochrane-Smith and Lytle, 1990) that show that teachers' participation in research is needed to increase professionalism and raise the level of teaching. Since researchers' behavior from the standpoint of ethics contributes to the socialization of teachers into research, even greater attention should be given to ethics in this kind of research. It is only natural that the next stage of the current research be to study teacher/informants views on ethical issues in teacher thinking.

As teacher thinking research practice shows, the time may be ripe for the second generation of researchers to espouse ethical specifications and modifications based on the current democratic perceptions of listening to the teacher's voice and accepting teachers as partners. This perception of collegiality could alter conservative attitudes without lessening the credit of the research community. And finally, in an era when true consent is required even for trivial actions, informant endorsement of their statements when used as data should become part and parcel of any research procedure.

We believe that the code of professional ethics guarding the relationship between professional and client in general, e.g., teacher-pupil, physician-patient, lawyer-client, etc., is unsuited to teacher thinking research where the teacher is more like the researcher's partner than a client or patient. The relationship between researcher

and teacher, however, has a different basis:

* The teacher usually doesn't approach the researcher to request "treatment"; the initiative comes from the researcher who thus needs the teacher's consent.
* The researcher's desire to build the relationship with the teacher stems from his/her interest in a phenomenon which s/he wishes to describe and clarify. It is only later that the relationship may develop into one of "treater-treated" or of cooperation.
* Unlike clients in other fields, who may not be well-educated or even illiterate, teachers are educated professionals with some knowledge of research methods.

For these reasons, the teacher can't be treated as a regular "client". However, s/he deserves the protection that clients of other fields get, and should not be treated as just another "case".

In reality, however, as we noted above, due to difference in status and vulnerability, the teacher is not a true partner. Clarifying the meaning of partnership in its limited conceptual framework may also contribute to cooperation based on honesty and mutual respect, i.e., sharing the results before publication is a must, though sharing the full research objectives at the initial stages is not always desirable. Detailing such specific ethical issues in this area is of extreme importance. Only in 1992 was an ethical code for educational research defined by AERA (Ethical Standards, 1992). Since high-status fields such as medicine and law have long had ethical codes and ethical committees to enforce them, establishing such a committee for the field of education may increase the awareness of our members and contribute to raising the status of the field of education (Sabar and Gibton, in

press)[3]. Clearly issues of ethics have not been sufficiently considered by the educational research community and much of what we do is done intuitively. In the best case, researchers' behavior in this area is based on codes of ethics carried over from researchers' training in other areas such as psychology, sociology, etc.

This mini-study does not allow for rigorous conclusions. However, it does shed light on a number of distinct issues, on difficulties and disagreements which arise, and leaves room for reflection. Ignoring them, as Kleinberger (1979) noted, is not a wise policy because without a sincere attempt to clarify our problems, we may come to find ourselves in an uncomfortable position. At the same time, we must remember that while we may make up guidelines for ethical decision-making, the tough decisions ultimately lie with each one of us, and depend on our personal values and judgements. Aristotle was the first to point out that the character of the agent is of utmost importance in the judgement of actions, and this remains valid today. It is therefore crucial to ingrain ethical issues such as the nature of the partnership with teacher/informants as thoroughly as possible among all researchers, so that in every situation we ask ourselves Ayers and Shubert's (1990) question: "What does it mean to do the right thing?".

Notes

1 In reality, codes of ethics enable the researcher, if not to lie, then to hide information from the subject as long as it is disclosed at the debriefing stage.

2 The right of the teacher to remain anonymous and maintain his/her privacy, or to be creditted and appear in print stems from the agreement reached by the parties. Initially, each has two basic rights; the right to privacy, and the right of ownership of the product of one's work. However, each can, if s/he so desires, give up these rights, if by so doing, other aims are achieved (e.g. the advancement of science).

3 In judging the level of professionalization among the various professions, it seems that the higher the status of the profession, the greater its members' awareness of ethical issues, the longer it has had an ethical code, a committee of ethics, etc., which then contribute further to the status of the profssion. It is therefore not surprising that, from this point of view, education has low status (Sabar and Gibton, in press).

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Table 1: Researchers' responses to the question:
"Do you view the teacher/informant as a research partner?"
(Israelis: N=12 International: N=25)

	Yes	It depends	No	TOTAL
Total	14	12	11	37
By Sex *				
Female	8	6	5	19 *
Male	5	5	5	15 *
* 3 respondents did not note gender on questionnaire				
By Age				
Under 40	3	-	-	3
40 - 50	8	5	5	18
Over 50	3	7	6	16
By Country				
North America	1	7	-	8
Scandinavia	1	2	5	8
rest of Europe	5	-	-	5
Asia/Pacific	3	-	1	4
Israel	4	3	5	12

Table 2: Researchers' responses to the question:
"To what extent do you share your research objectives with your teacher/informant?"

	Fully 5	4	3	2	Not at all 1
International (N=25):					
Yes (N=10)	5	5	-	-	-
It depends (N=9)	2	3	2	1	1
No (N=6)	-	1	1	2	2
Israelis (N=8*):					
Yes (N=1)	1	-	-	-	-
It depends (N=2)	1	-	1	-	-
No (N=5)	-	-	3	1	1
TOTAL (N=33)	9	9	7	4	4

* with 4 others, the issue did not arise